tion, he had performed much work. It happened that he now required an alteration of some extent, and gave directions for plans to be furnished of the same. The builder unfortunately introduced an architect, one whom he esteemed a sincere friend (and who is at the present time held in high repute) to furnish the same instead of himself. The gentleman agreed to the proposal; the plans were furnished (and good ones they were, though not free from extravagance); but this worthy architect, instead of placing the work to be executed by the person who obtained him the employment, immediately proposed general competition for the same, alleging that it would be done at a cheaper rate thereby. His whining persuasions had the desired effect, and the builder afterwards lost the future works of the gentleman he had so long retained. What is the scheme of many of our architects now? It is not generally known, but it is a truth, they are using every exertion to cripple little builders, and throw all their works into the hands of a few of our large ones,—some even have the hardihood to avow it.

If these practices are to continue, (and they are more likely to increase than diminish,) surely it is high time that a body of men like master builders should arouse from the lethargy in which they have so long been at ease, and take immediate measures for the overthrow of such a system as the present, and if they do not, insolvency and bankruptcy must henceforth be before their eyes, although we think there has been enough of that for these past few months to make up for the next hundred years, at least it is to be hoped such is the case. The present practices want a thorough uprooting, and a regeneration of things is absolutely necessary, if trade is again to be put in a sound and healthy state.

There has been a growing system for the last few years of furnishing quantities to builders about to compete, in some instances a surveyor being employed by the architect only for the purpose, and in others one being appointed by the builder also. In both cases the system is (and I say it from experience) *bad*, very *bad;* in the former case especially, nine times in ten it is disastrous to the builder. As one proof out of many I could name, not long since I knew a case where of Caen stone some hundreds of feet were omitted, and other articles were deficient, though not to such an extent. Should this reach the eye of parties who have some knowledge of the same, let them not attempt a contradiction, for in my possession are the bills of quantities and the dimensions, as furnished by the surveyor. It is a wiser plan altogether for each competing builder to have his quantities taken for his own especial use; it is not only more satisfactory, but the competitors become less in number likewise. But why, I should like to know, if we must have competition, why should not it be done by schedule of prices, as it was formerly? Surely it is a more honourable and honest way; besides, it gives employment to a most useful class of men, now all but extinct, viz., the surveyor, and it puts a check upon undue speculation; but without a combination we cannot again hope to see an improvement in the present state of things—a state of things bordering on perfect madness.

A correspondent observes, that it is now getting quite common to apply for an estimate, and then hawk the same about from one tradesman to another, in order to get the work done at a cheaper and still cheaper rate. This is correct; the mischief, however, ends not here. The subject is discussed with friends at the dinner and tea table, and the man of principle—he of the live-and-let-live ideas—has his mind thereby perverted, and he commences the system hitherto new to him; and so, from friend to friend, this pernicious doctrine is conveyed, till all just and honourable feelings are entirely lost. In the article of which I have before spoken, you question the truth of builders sending in nominal amounts: it is of every-day occurrence. It is even said that, among the largest builders, in nine cases out of ten, the contract is selected by the body for one. I remember a case myself where a contract, a few years since, was to be delivered for some works, under 5,000*l.* An hour or so before the time named for the delivery of the tenders, the builders met, opened their tenders, and prepared fresh ones. It was then and there arranged that 400*l.* should be added on each estimate, which said sum should be divided among the parties competing,—the measure was carried out, and the tenders delivered in due form, the lowest party being the successful man.

We are, certainly, all in a state of monomania, as regards trade; we certainly have forgotten that God created man to be dependent upon his fellow—the rich for the poor, and the poor for the rich; and we are forgetting that, if we subvert these laws, we must naturally go on increasing more and more in degeneracy, and, at last, we shall discover that we have acted no better part than some poor maniac, who, in his animosity, has been his own greatest oppressor.

A Surveyor.

POSITION OF ARTISTS.*

Among the ancients, artists were the teachers of the people, and their works stood in the place of lectures on religion, morality, and history. Since the press has diffused its influence over all nations and classes, the arts of design are no longer so important as a part of public instruction, though still lending an useful aid to civilisation, enlarging the sphere of intellectual enjoyment among the people, raising their moral character, and thus assisting in the maintenance of order. Good taste is nothing more than an emanation of knowledge, and can seldom be found but in minds which have been well educated and cultivated; it is, in fact, nothing more than the feeling in which all such minds are agreed, and the result of a common discipline. There may be truth in the saying that the artist, like the poet, is born, not made; and sometimes great works are produced by untutored genius; but in general the maxim of Horace will apply to every art:—

'ego nec studium sine divite vená,
Nec rude quid prosit video ingenium.'†

Few artists can rise to the standard of a refined taste, without a better cultivation of the mind than can often fall to the lot of natural talents in this country of expensive education. Even with the most happy union of genius and cultivation, he will not be saved from the necessity of complying with the taste of an ill-educated public: because, in the absence of all other protection, the favour alone of that public can enable him to gain a livelihood by his profession. If a painter rise above the vulgar taste, his works will often remain unsold. An enlightened patron may occasionally secure to him a reward for the completion of some more elevated purpose; but such rare exceptions to the generality of purchasers will hardly, in the utmost conceivable aggregate, maintain the artist in his proper position in society, unless he devote also a large portion of his time to works adapted to the general market, such as portraits, scenes taken from the fashionable drama or romance,—works, in short, which, instead of aiming at a permanent reputation, recommend themselves merely as an elegant kind of furniture for the houses of those whose principal occupations are to accumulate wealth, and to employ its superfluities in a rivalship of ostentation.

The worldly condition of sculpture is still worse than that of painting, sculpture requiring a more educated mind, a more perfect conception of the beautiful, and a greater stretch of intellect in embodying that conception. The learned and skilful sculptor is therefore more rarely found: he meets with a smaller number of congenial minds to appreciate his efforts; and among the lower classes scarcely any that can understand them. And yet he has some advantages over the painter. While the latter, in his more perishable productions, derives little or no assistance from the ancients, the sculptor has the opportunity of studying some of those ancient specimens of the plastic art which seem to us like the productions of a different species of mortals. In high patronage, also, the sculptor has an advantage, in the public demand which continually occurs for memorials of great events or of distinguished individuals,—works which cannot easily be confined to Gothic sculpture. Nevertheless, the advances made in sculpture have not been such as the establishment of a rich museum of ancient works in the metropolis gave some reason to hope for, either in that first step to improvement, an imitation of ancient art, or in the application of the taste and skill so acquired to modern purposes: the demand for public monuments has not produced sufficient capacity to execute them, and the profession of a sculptor, like that of a painter, is chiefly supported by the manufacture of portraits,—a very pleasing branch of art, but created to gratify feelings of vanity or affection, totally unconnected with cultivation of mind, and indicating, by the immense preference given to it, the low intellectual tone of the present age, as well as that something more than commercial protection is required for improvement in the arts of design, not less than in science and literature.

* * * *

Had science possessed its due influence or authority during the past century, many great works essential to the safety or prosperity of the country would not at this time remain to be done; nor others of comparative inutility have been executed at an enormous expense, such as the royal canals of Scotland and Ireland, the Waterloo-bridge, and the Thames-tunnel. There would probably have been a better management of public works, a better system of naval architecture; and when steam was applied to communication by sea and land, the Councils of Science might have saved the community from much of the needless expenses, gambling and ruin, the mechanical errors, and disregard of the public safety, which the rapid increase of disposable capital in England, and an insatiable thirst of high profits, have occasioned in the prosecution of this great social improvement. Nor is it likely, if Science had had its due share in the national councils, that the taste and arts of England would have had for their representatives the York and Nelson columns, the discordant architecture and disproportionate objects which meet the view in Trafalgar-square, or the colossal figures on either side of the western entrance of the metropolis: one a copy of an antique figure holding a horse, which has been forced into the representation of a combatant; the other, an equestrian statue in repose, on the summit of a lofty arch.

* From "Thoughts on the Degradation of Science in England." By F. K. S. Rodwell, Bond-street.

† De Arte Poetica, v. 409.

COMPENSATION—BATTERSEA PARK.

The first of a series of claims which have been made in respect of property required for the intended park at Battersea, was tried on the 2nd inst. before the Sheriff of Surrey, at the Horns-tavern, Kennington. The case was that of a Mr. Chabot, who claimed 10,212*l.* for three acres of land on the shore of the river.

In support of this claim his counsel called the following surveyors, viz.:—Mr. Porter, who, as we understand, valued the property at 9,499*l.*; Mr. Tress, at 8,578*l.*; Mr. Lee, at 8,500*l.*; and Mr. Hunt, at 7,115*l.* Mr. Lee and Mr. G. L. Taylor also valued the property upon the assumption that the claimant might inclose a further portion of the river; and, upon such assumption, Mr. Lee valued the property at 11,215*l.*; Mr. Taylor, 9,642*l.*

It was elicited, upon cross examination, that the owner had purchased the property at public auction from the late Earl Spencer, in 1835, for 120*l.* The jury viewed the ground, and, after a protracted inquiry, returned a verdict of 750*l.*!!

A correspondent asks whether more fools than rogues were concerned in this inquiry, and where he ought to look for them, in the witness or the jury-box?

Mr. Chabot complains gravely of the injustice done him. It appears that the sum given was for one acre only, the claimant's right to two acres, formerly a wet-dock, being disallowed, without notice to him that his title would be questioned.

Improvement of Labourers' Cottages.—The fourth report of the Northumberland Cottage Improvement Society* contains plans, elevations, and estimates of cottages erected at Craster; at Choppington, near Morpeth; at Doddington, and at Rock: they present nothing new, but, as serving to point attention to the necessity of improving the dwellings of the labourer, the efforts of the society deserve great praise.

* Whitaker, London: Smith, Alnwick.

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